

Message Text

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SUBJ: SOVIET JOURNALISTS LINK BREZHNEV'S

FUTURE TO PRESIDENT'S STATUS

1. SUMMARY. DURING THE SECRETARY'S MOSCOW VISIT, THREE NOVOSTI AGENCY STAFFERS PRIVATELY OUTLINED TO A VISITING VOA REPORTER THEIR VIEW OF THE CONSEQUENCES HERE OF ANY CHANGES IN THE AMERICAN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, A CRITICAL AND PERHAPS OVERDRAWN PICTURE OF THE SOVIET MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, AND THE LATEST RUMORS REGARDING A GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION. WE PASS ON THEIR REMARKS AS THE VIEWPOINT OF INTERESTED BUT NOT NECESSARILY WELL-INFORMED INDIVIDUALS, WITH THE ADDITIONAL CAVEAT THAT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE BREZHNEV REGIME. AN AIRGRAM FOLLOWS WITH DETAILS. END SUMMARY.

2. SOVIET "MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX" MEMBERS -- INCLUDING GENERALS, BUREAUCRATS AND PARTY LEADERS -- WERE TEMED "JACKSONITES" (DZHEKSONOVI) BY THE NOVOSTI STAFFERS. THIS "COMPLEX" IS ALLEGEDLY DISENCHANTED WITH RECENT FOREIGN SETBACKS AND WOULD USE A NIXON IMPEACHEMNT TO OUST BREZHNEV.

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THE JOURNALISTS CLAIMED THAT BREZHNEV WOULD BE IN

TROUBLE ANYWAY BECAUSE OF FAILURE TO PRODUCE MFN AND CREDITS.

3. THE NOVOSTI STAFFERS ARGUED BREZHNEV'S VULNERABILITY BY ANALOGY WITH KHRUSHCHEV'S OUSTER. THEY SAW A DIRECT LINK BETWEEN THE ALLEGEDLY CLOSE TIES BETWEEN KENNEDY AND KHRUSHCHEV, WHO WAS LEFT IN AN EXPOSED POSITION AFTER KENNEDY'S ASSASSINATION.

4. THEY ASSERTED THAT BREZHNEV PLANS TO REVAMP THE POLITBURO INTO AN AMERICAN-STYLE PRESIDENTIAL CABINET TO BE CALLED A STATE COUNCIL. PARTY BUREAUCRATS WOULD BE REPLACED BY CAPABLE SPECIALISTS AND TECHNOCRATS IN THE STATE COUNCIL WHO WOULD BE AN EQUAL MATCH FOR THEIR AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS. WHILE THESE PLANS FOR REORGANIZATION WOULD ALSO BE OPPOSED BY THE "COMPLEX," THE SOVIET JOURNALISTS FELT THAT ON BALANCE THE LEADERSHIP WOULD ADOPT THE STATE COUNCIL PROPOSAL AND MAINTAIN THE EMPHASIS ON SOVIET-AMERICAN TIES BECAUSE OF THE DECLINE IN IDEOLOGY AND THE PRACTICAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

5. COMMENT: WE SEE NO HISTORICAL MERIT IN CITING THE KHRUSHCHEV LINK WITH KENNEDY. KHRUSCCEV'S OUSTER STEMMED MORE FROM DOMESTIC FAILURES AND FRICTION WITH THE PARTY APPARATUS THAN FROM HIS AMERICAN POLICY. BREZHNEV DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE SUCH INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES.

6. IN OTHER RESPECTS THE REMARKS ON THE BREZHNEV'S DIFFICULTIES WITH THE "MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX" AND ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOVIET AND AMERICAN DOMESTIC POLITICS SEEM TO BE OVERSIMPLIFIED AND OVERDRAWN. THESE ARE, HOWEVER, QUESTIONS WHICH THE EMBASSY WILL BE ADDRESSING IN COMING WEEKS.

7. RUMORS OF THE CREATION OF A STATE COUNCIL HAVE POPPED UP INTERMITTENTLY OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS. THE DETAILS PROVIDED BY THE NOVOSTI STAFFERS ARE MORE CONCRETE THAN THOSE PREVIOUSLY AVAILABLE, AND CONFIDENTIAL

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THE AMERICAN PATTERN IS CERTAINLY INTRIGUING. BUT AS FAR AS FOREIGN AFFAIRS ARE CONCERNED THE MAIN ADVANTAGE OF A STATE COUNCIL, WHICH WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE HEADED BY BREZHNEV, WOULD BE TO OVERCOME THE CURRENT PROTOCOLARY DISABILITIES NOW ENCOUNTERED BY BREZHNEV IN HIS DEALINGS WITH HEADS OF STATE. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PRESENT POLITBURO, PRIMARILY KOSYGIN AND PODGORNYY, WOULD FIND THEIR ROLES

SIGNIFICANTLY DOWNGRADED IN A STATE COUNCIL. THE
POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A REORGANIZATION IS ANOTHER TOPIC
WHICH WE WILL BE STUDYING IN COMING WEEKS.
STOESSEL

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